1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

This unity of 'the social sphere of adult and child' is a striking feature of the Umbundu educational process. A child learns by actual participation in adult activities. He participates as soon as he is able and in so far as he is able in all phases of adult life. A child begins early to assume responsibility both for himself and for as much regular 'adult activity' as his knowledge and ability may allow him to take on. This being the case, it is to be expected that all factors—physiological, psychological, social, and cultural—are so closely interrelated in the process of Umbundu education that their unity is almost organic.

Given this unitary social sphere, it is easy to understand that children always want to grow up. They are anxious to undertake full responsibility and full participation as early as they may. It has been pointed out that adults do not, or are expected not to, force the pace: they must not set tasks beyond the ability of the children in the actual stage of their development.[1] Normal development and normal behaviour are expected of children as a matter of course.[2] The possibility of aberrant behaviour[3] does not seem regularly to enter parents' minds, much less their utterances, as is too often the case with us. Adult expectation of normal development in children is perhaps best seen in the Umbundu concept of sense or intelligence (*olondunge*), something which every normal person is expected to have in some measure from the time of weaning. It is a relative term when applied to children and the young.[4] Some adults have it in greater measure than others. But every *person* will have it according to the proverb:

Omuku lovonya, omunu lolondunge.
A rat with fur, a person with sense.

As every rat has fur, every person has sense.

Learning, as he does, in the real social and cultural situation of Umbundu life, the child develops genetically the behaviour

Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York: Morrow, 1928). Some writers have claimed this to be true of all the simpler cultures, e.g. Dewey, op. cit., p. 8 f., but cf. Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea* (New York: Morrow, 1930). Many of the African initiation rites seem to have been introduced from the outside and hence involve a distinct dichotomy, *vide* Stayt, op. cit.

[1] See *supra*, p. 110.

[2] See Fortes' discussion of a similar attitude among the Tallensi, op. cit., pp. 25–8.

[3] For the fatalistic attitude taken on failure to conform, see *supra*, p. 106.

[4] See *supra*, p. 100.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

pattern 'singled out in the institutions of his culture'.[1] I agree with Fortes on the Tallensi that 'The total pattern is not built up brick by brick like a house, but evolves'.[2] I am not convinced, however, of the necessity for postulating 'embryonic forms' or *schemas* of the total patterns supposed to be present in the child from the beginning.[3] Whether the *schemas* are supposed to be a part of the child's innate equipment, Fortes does not make clear, but I see no necessity for any such hypothesis. The method by which and the situation in which the Ocimbundu child learns, are ample explanation for the early and thorough development of the pattern of his culture.

Neither is it necessary to postulate either 'faculties' or 'instinctive drives' to explain Umbundu education.[4] Rather this study takes a view of 'human nature . . . as consisting essentially of specific situations'.[5] Instances in support of this view could be cited from the descriptive part of this chapter but that would be outside the scope of this study. The most important fact with regard to Umbundu education is its identification with life: the absence of cleavage as between 'school' and society, as between the social sphere of the child and the adult. The most important educational method in use is actual participation in the social and cultural or 'real life' situation. The educational 'content' is the whole Umbundu culture, consisting of attitudes (psychological and social), social usages, skills, observances, and traditional 'literature'. By far the most important are the social attitudes and usages. I turn therefore to the problems of

Social Adjustment

The education of the Ocimbundu child in the traditional social setting is far more social than is the case with us. The child learns

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), p. 254.

[2] M. Fortes, op. cit., p. 42.

[3] Ibid., pp. 42 ff. Fortes attributes the concept of *schemas* to F. C. Bartlett (*Remembering*).

[4] In his discussion of education among the Tallensi, quoted above, Fortes does not specifically mention either of these hypotheses and he rightly remarks that some writers have 'attributed an almost mystical significance to imitation' as the principal method by which a child learns. He then proceeds, however, to classify the learning processes under *Mimesis*, *Identification*, *Co-operation*, and *Play*. Except for the first, these activities are of much importance in Umbundu education.

[5] Hugh Hartshorne, *Character in Human Relations*, p. 195 (New York: Scribner's, 1932); see also Allport, op. cit., p. 81.